

# THE LINK

A Digital Digest for Iowa's Aging Network



IDA IOWA  
DEPARTMENT  
ON AGING

December 2021



## News & Updates

### AARP Aging Survey

A 2,826-person [AARP survey](#) showed that the number of older adults choosing to age in place has stayed consistent at about 77% over more than a decade, with the COVID-19 pandemic apparently having no effect on it. "It's really important that we understand what people's housing preferences are, what they want, what they need and how well their options are meeting their needs," said AARP vice president Rodney Harrell.

### Free Lyft Rides for Vaccines

Back in May, NCOA and Lyft teamed up to provide free rides up to \$25 each way to help older adults receive their COVID-19 vaccine. We're excited to announce that Lyft is offering additional support to older adults who want to get vaccinated or receive their booster shot through the end of the year.

The new Lyft promo code we're offering (**NCOABOOSTER**) can be used for rides to and from each dose of the COVID vaccine, to a booster shot appointment, or any other need serving an older adult during the pandemic. Like the previous ride codes, the new code below covers up to \$50 each trip (\$25 to an appointment and \$25 back home). There are no location restrictions, and the ride code is valid until funding lasts or through December 31, 2021.

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## Nutrition Services

### Encore Café Spotlight

The Iowa Department on Aging works with six Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) throughout Iowa to administer Older Americans Act (OAA) nutrition programs intended to reduce hunger, promote socialization and promote health and well-being among those 60 and over. Despite a growing aging population, participation in OAA congregate meal programs has steadily declined in recent years. Iowa Department on Aging is working with Iowa's AAAs to modernize these programs with innovative strategies to attract new participants to take advantage of these services to support healthy aging.

One of these exciting innovations is the Encore Cafe, developed by the Heritage Area Agency on Aging and offered in Linn and Washington counties. A recently published journal *Encore Café: An Innovative and Effective Congregate Nutrition Program*, *Journal of Nutrition in Gerontology and Geriatrics* shows how the Encore Café has resulted in a 386% increase of meal distribution and a 3,164% increase of Congregate Meal Participants participants during a two-year period, compared to a 20.8% reduction at traditional meal sites across the states. You can find a more in depth review of the journal [at the publication's website](#).



## Family Caregiver

### Iowa Department on Aging Director Linda Miller

Director Miller, along with Kay Vargas and Kristie Wiltgen of Area Agencies on Aging, wrote an op-ed outlining the support that is offered to Family Caregivers across the state through the Iowa Department on Aging and the AAAs. Please take the time to read this very [insightful article](#).



## Elder Abuse Prevention

### Iowa Fraud Fighters

According to the Federal Trade Commission, romance scams reached a record \$304 million in losses in 2020, up about 50% from 2019. To help protect Iowans, the Iowa Department on Aging's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (IDA RSVP) has teamed up with the Iowa Insurance Division's (IID) Fraud Fighters program. Together, these state agencies are working to educate Iowans on shielding their savings from scammers. It's time to take a stand and protect yourself and loved ones. Become a Fraud Fighter by joining IDA RSVP and help spread awareness to your community about the intricate scams taking millions of dollars from innocent individuals. Read this [article to learn more about current scams](#).

The FBI estimates that older adults lose more than \$3 billion each year to financial scams and fraud. Considering that these cases are likely under-reported, this is a serious issue. Older adults are often times targeted because they usually own their home, have financial savings, and are trusting—which make them the perfect target for scammers. It is important to be aware of some of the common scams Iowans are facing and how to report it. To learn more about common consumer scams visit the [Iowa Fraud Fighter website](#).



# Falls Prevention

## Home Improvement Projects

Visiting your aging family members during the holiday can be a great time to start conversations about what could be considered difficult topics about the health and welfare of older adults in their families. Older adults strongly express a preference for continuing to age in place in their own homes. This could be a good opportunity to look around the home and discuss what difficulties they have noticed day to day, or what might be on the horizon. AARP has a list of common home improvement projects that could help guide this discussion, and fall prevention assessments might be a good next step for more ideas. Read more at the [AARP website](#) and find resources, tools, and information on the [IDA Home Modification page](#).



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The mission of the Iowa Department on Aging is to develop a comprehensive, coordinated and cost-effective system of long-term living and community support services that helps older Iowans maintain health and independence in their homes and communities.